

# Conference Report Highlights

October 5, 1998

## Highlights of the Conference Report to accompany H.R. 4101—Agriculture Appropriations, FY 1999

The Senate begins consideration of the Agriculture Appropriations conference report today. On Friday, the House agreed to the conference report by a vote of 333-53.

The bill provides a total of \$55.9 billion, a large portion (65 percent) of which consists of mandatory spending on food stamps and other nutrition programs. Approximately \$4.2 billion is provided for emergency aid relief to farmers and ranchers. The conference report also provides about \$1.1 billion to the Food and Drug Administration, but does not include the controversial language that would have barred FDA from testing and approving abortion-inducing drugs such as RU-486.

### Budget Authority

Bill Total:	\$55.897 billion (Discretionary: \$13.651 billion)
1998 Appropriations:	\$49.434 billion (Discretionary: \$13.8 billion)
1999 Request:	\$59.824 billion (Discretionary: \$15.4 billion)

### Key Provisions

- ▶ **\$4.2 billion to Provide Emergency Aid to Farmers**
- Of that total, \$4.177 billion is contingent emergency appropriations, which means the President must declare a disaster before funds can be released. Under the budget rules, emergency appropriations do not require offsets elsewhere in the budget. The remaining \$81.4 million in emergency appropriations are not contingent, and are provided to the Farm Service Agency and Natural Resources Conservation Service.
- The aid package includes:
  - \$1.5 billion for payments to farmers for natural disaster losses;
  - \$1.65 billion in market loss payments;
  - \$675 million for multi-year losses;
  - \$175 million for livestock feed assistance; and
  - \$200 million for other emergency-related aid.

► **Agricultural Programs: \$14.4 billion**

- Economic Research Service is funded at \$65.8 million, including \$12.2 million for studies and evaluation of child nutrition, WIC, and food stamps programs.
- Agricultural Research Service is funded at \$838.4 million.
- Cooperative State Research, Education & Extension Service is funded at \$915.3 million.
- A \$928 million program level is provided for the Farm Service Agency, of which \$716.9 million is from appropriations.
- Animal Plant Health Inspection Service is funded at \$433.5 million.
- Agricultural Marketing Service is funded at \$58.2 million.
- Food Safety and Inspection Service is provided \$609.1 million, including the full amount requested for the food safety initiative and inspection costs.
- Farm assistance programs are provided \$1.09 billion, supporting a \$2.3 billion loan authorization level.
- Federal Crop Insurance Corporation is funded at \$1.5 billion.
- Commodity Credit Corporation funded at \$8.439 billion for net realized losses. This reimbursement is largely responsible for the total bill's increase over 1998 levels.

► **Conservation Programs: \$793 million**

- Natural Resources Conservation Service is funded at \$792.4 million, including \$641.2 million for operations, \$10.4 million for watershed surveys and planning, \$99.4 million for watershed and flood prevention operations, \$35 million for resource conservation and development, and \$6.3 million for the Forestry Incentives program.

► **Rural Economic & Community Development: \$2.2 billion**

- Funding is provided to support a total loan authorization level for rural housing programs of \$4.3 billion, including \$4 billion for single-family, section 502. Also includes \$583 million for rental assistance (the full request and an increase of \$42 million over 1998).
- Rural Utilities Service electric and telecommunications loans are funded at \$1.5 billion, \$92 million more than 1998.
- \$724.7 million is provided for the Rural Community Advancement Program.

► **Domestic Food and Nutrition Programs: \$36.1 billion**

Of the total funding provided in the Agriculture Appropriations bill, 65 percent is for domestic food assistance programs:

- The School Lunch Program is funded at \$5.4 billion, and the School Breakfast Program is funded at \$1.4 billion, the same as the President's request (both are funded at the President's requested level).
- The Child and Adult Food Program is funded at \$1.6 billion, which is the same as requested, and \$140 million is provided to the elderly feeding program.
- The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) is funded at \$3.9 billion.
- Food Stamps are funded at \$23.59 billion.
- Commodity Assistance Program is funded at \$131 million
- ▶ **Foreign Assistance: \$1.197 billion**
- Foreign Agricultural Service and General Sales Manager is funded at \$136 million.
- Public Law 480 programs is appropriated \$1.056 billion, for a total program level of \$1.082 billion.
- ▶ **Food and Drug Administration: \$1.124 billion total program level**
- The Administration's request assumed an additional \$127.7 million in collections would be available to FDA for 1999 from proposed user fees, but they could not be counted in the appropriations bill due to lack of authorization.
- The Food and Drug Administration is funded at \$1.1 billion, \$124 million more than FY98, but \$92.4 million more than the President's request. An additional \$132.3 million from Prescription Drug User Fees (PDUFA) and \$14.4 million from mammography clinics user fees is authorized for salaries and expenses.
- The Food Safety Inspection Service is increased \$20.5 million over FY98, bringing FY99 funding to \$609.3 million.
- The Food Safety Initiative is increased by \$51.9 million.
- \$34 million for the youth tobacco initiatives (same level as last year), but does not fund the requested \$100 million increase for this account. Report language suggests this funding should be augmented by any tobacco settlement funds that may be available.
- ▶ **Legislative Provisions**
- Exempt agricultural products from sanctions on India and Pakistan.
- Require a study on country-of-origin meat labeling and report in one year.
- Extend the statute of limitations on civil rights claims at USDA and provide a 180-day expedited review process.

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